1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda
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CHAPTER XIV

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD CEREMONIES

THE ceremonies connected with childbirth begin before the birth of the child. These ceremonies are only performed for the first child or when the woman obtains a new husband, so that they may, from one point of view, be regarded as marriage ceremonies. Nevertheless, I prefer to consider them here, and to leave the ceremonies more strictly connected with marriage till a later chapter. These latter ceremonies are far less elaborate than those to be described in this chapter, and may be more fitly considered in connexion with the social regulation of marriage.

At or about the fifth month of pregnancy, a ceremony is performed which is called *ûr patitth kaitütitthpimi*, "village left, hand we burnt," or more shortly, *ûrvatpimi*, "village we leave," or *kaitütitthpimi*. The ceremony is named from its two essential features; the woman leaves the village and lives secluded in a hut and her wrists are burnt.

When it is known that the ceremony is to take place, a special hut, called *pushars* (Fig. 45), is built in a prescribed place at some little distance from the village, or if this building already exists, it is put into good order. The word *pushars* means "mud-house" or "earth-house," which would seem to point to a time when a temporary hut of mud was used, but at the present time it is built of wood, though it is of much simpler and rougher construction than the ordinary house.

The distance of the *pushars* from the huts in which the people live depends on the degree of sacredness of the village. According to Breeks, the distance is greatest in those villages

843 the neck of the woman formed any part of the Toda ceremony.

It seemed, however, that after *pursütpimi* the woman is allowed to resume her ornaments, which she has been prohibited from wearing up to this time, and it is possible that this resumption of her ornaments may have been mistaken for "tying the *tali*." It seemed clear, however, that the ornaments were not put on by the husband, nor did the resumption of the ornaments partake in any way of a ceremonial character.

As I hoped to have a chance of witnessing this ceremony during my visit, I did not thresh out the details of *pursütpimi* as thoroughly as those of most other ceremonies and my account is not as complete as I could wish.

[851] The ceremony of *pursütpimi* is of the greatest importance from the social point of view and, as we shall see later, the fatherhood of the child depends entirely upon it. The man who gives the bow and arrow is the father of the child for all social purposes, and is regarded as such even if he has had nothing to do with the woman before the ceremony.

The ceremony must always be performed during the first pregnancy of a woman and it takes place in any succeeding pregnancy only when it is desired for any reason to alter the fatherhood of the children. One of the most serious scandals [624] in Toda society is the birth of a child when the mother has not been through this ceremony.

[764] Both the pregnancy ceremonies are performed at the first funeral of an unmarried or barren woman. In the case of an unmarried girl the bow and arrow are given at the *pursütpimi* ceremony by a *matchuni* of the deceased—*i.e.*, by a relative whom the deceased girl might herself have married. The hand-burning of the *urvatpimi* ceremony is usually performed by a woman of the same clan as the deceased.

171 Since the ceremonies are only performed at the first
843 pregnancy, or when it is desired to change the fatherhood
851 of a child, it seems clear that they closely resemble marriage ceremonies. They would seem to be either marriage cere-
595 monies which have been postponed till shortly before the

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

birth of the first child,[1] or, what is more probable, pregnancy ceremonies resembling those customary in India, which have acquired social significance and have come to resemble marriage ceremonies. But the numerous ceremonies which are performed during pregnancy by the Hindus take place during every pregnancy and are, therefore, sharply differentiated from the Toda rites.

CHILDBIRTH

When the woman returns from the seclusion-hut after the *urvatpimi* ceremony she lives in her usual home with the rest of the family and does her usual work, and she is delivered there. It seemed that any one might be present, and that there was no special ceremony connected with delivery.

During delivery, the woman kneels with her head resting on the breast of a man, usually her husband, who clasps his hands behind her neck. She is tended by a woman, usually by one noted for skill in these matters. If there is much delay, all men and women present lay their hands on the head of the woman and say:

"*Swâmi naz vûrmâ; swâmi pûdikan tarmâ.*"

If this is not efficacious a man brings water in a vessel and prays, stirring the water with a piece of grass of the kind called *kakar*. When the prayer is finished, the man sprinkles the water over the woman.

The cord (*pekû*) is cut with a knife, being held down with a stick while it is being cut.

The afterbirth is called *naj* or *pekûkûdri*. If there is delay in its delivery, a medicine called *najmad* is given which is procured from the Badagas. The afterbirth is buried on the day on which the woman goes to the seclusion-hut, a few days after delivery.

[1] This seems to have occurred in a similar ceremony practised by the Badagas, among whom it is said that a woman is not fully considered a wife till about the seventh month of the first pregnancy, when a cord is put round her neck by the husband and the legal marriage becomes complete. (See Thurston, *Bull.* IV., p. 167.)

2: Marshall G-5 (1870) 1873 Toda

CHAP. XXV.

583 584 girl accepts him, he must marry her. The power of taking or rejecting this man who aspires to be her future lord being still hers, the opportunity of judging for herself, how far he is to her taste, is now afforded her. Most practical and sensible race!

583 584 684 In the absence of all rites and ceremonies, but with the approval of parents, and in full cognisance of the village community of relatives, these young people are now held to be a married pair, on trial for a day and night. An entire house—eight feet square—is given up to them, and in this they live with closed door during the short period of probation, food being passed in to them by the girl's mother. The damsel is required to make up her mind on the expiry of this brief honeymoon, either to accept or reject her suitor. If she refuse the man, he goes away the subject of depreciatory remarks. If, on the contrary, she should tell her mother that she will have him, the pair are now held to be man and wife.[1] Neither he nor she can recede from their bargain without punishment; which would take the form of a fine of some portion of the curious dower, if referred to a tribunal of Elders—kûtacaram.

585 301 431 The husband now gives his wife a necklace,[2] of value according to his means—unmarried girls do not wear necklaces—and sets her up with a new mantle. The bride may receive from affectionate parents little trifles towards beginning to keep house. I tried to ascertain what would be a welcome present on such occasions, but found that after my informant had mentioned a brass cup and plate he stumbled so much, I feel quite within the bounds of safety if I throw in a pair of brass armlets or silver ear-rings.

585 The wife now either accompanies her husband to his own house, or they both remain in her father's village, according

[1] Literally Âl='*husband*' or '*man*.' Kâtvoti='*wife*' or '*she who is bound to me*.' See derivation in Chapter VII., Note 8.

[2] Among some of the tribes in South India, marriage is ratified by tying a thread or thin slip of bark round the neck. This practice shows the origin of the Toda custom.

2: Marshall G-5 (1870) 1873 Toda

as may be most convenient to them. In either case, the marriage both in name and in fact, is identical.

It is the custom for the husband to give a feast to his nearest relatives on such a joyous occasion.

It will be seen that up to this stage, the woman is married with her own consent to one man—he who pays the dowry, or gives security to society for his own good behaviour. But now, if the husband has brothers or very near relatives, all living together, they may each, if both she and he consent, participate in the right to be considered her husband also, on making up a share of the dowry that has been paid. In fact it was formerly their almost universal custom—in the days when women were more scarce than they are now—for *a family of near relations to live together in one mand, having wife, children and cattle all in common.*

Now if we consider that one or more brothers may each become the husbands of separate wives by virtue of having each paid a dower, and that younger brothers as they grow to age of maturity, and other brothers as they become widowed, may each, either take separate wives or purchase shares in those already in the family, we can at once understand that any degree of complication in perfectly lawful wedded life, may be met with, from the sample of the single man living with a single wife, to that of the group of relatives married to a group of wives. We begin to see also why tribes following polyandrous habits, endeavour to prevent further complications by making widows 'remain in the family.'

All the children of these very promiscuous unions are held to be brothers and sisters. And as, as is manifest, a generation or two of such marriages must produce inextricable confusion in relationships, so we find that the Todas, who like nothing so much as reducing things to simple formulæ, rather ignore the whole subject, terming them anatama.[4] They will

[4] See Note 19 of Chapter VII.

7:Thurston E-5 (no date)1909
AW60 Toda AW60

595 851 842 [805] [824] when they return to the mand. The time is determined, in the vicinity of Ootacamund, by the opening of the flowers of *Onothera tetraptera* (evening primrose), a garden escape called by the Todas âru mani pûv (six o'clock flower), which opens towards evening.* It may [765] be noted that, at the second funeral of a male, a miniature bow and three arrows are burnt with various other articles within the stone circle (azaram).

648 585 A few years ago (1902), the Todas, in a petition to Government, prayed for special legislation to legalise their marriages on the lines of the Malabar Marriage Act. The Government was of opinion that legislation was unnecessary, and that it was open to such of the Todas as were willing to sign the declaration prescribed by section 10 of the Marriage Act III of 1872 to contract legal marriages under the provision of that Act. The Treasury Deputy Collector of the Nîlgiris was appointed Registrar of Toda marriages. No marriage has been registered up to the present time.

847 178 The practice of infanticide among the Todas is best summed up in the words of an aged Toda during an interview with Colonel Marshall.† "I was a little boy when Mr. Sullivan (the first English pioneer of the Nilgiris) visited these mountains. In those days it was the custom to kill children, but the practice has long died out, and now one never hears of it. I don't know whether it was wrong or not to kill them, but we were very poor, and could not support our children. Now every one has a mantle (putkuli), but formerly there was only one for the whole family. We did not kill them to please any god, but because it was our custom. The mother never nursed the child, and the parents did

* I have seen this plant growing on the guns in front of the Pulhêri bungalow.
† *Op. cit.*

9:Emeneau L-5 (1935-1938) 1939 AW60 Toda AW60

Toda names were given at all. *E.g.* [kanfuɪsodj] gave no Toda names to his children, though his interest in tribal affairs is intense and his connexion with the tribe is fairly intimate. I cannot explain his failure to give Toda names, though a contributing factor is probably to be seen in the fact that his wife is not Toda by origin. In the few cases where I have recorded Toda names for the children of Christian Todas, tribal patterns were followed for the females. *E.g.* [tuaːsmonguuːn] (59, Tormungudr) named one of his daughters [sotjabuːf] "spiritual power-flower," [9] which has as its first member [sotj], occurring in the song-language paired with [tuːL] in references to the power of the gods or the dairy-complexes. There is probably in this name however a transfer to the Christian sphere of thought. This man's other daughter was also given a Toda name, but she is so generally known, even to the tribal Todas, as Mary that my informants were unable to remember the Toda name. Two girls recently born were named [piɪjiːʒfuːf] "silver-flower" and [tyɪjiːʒfuːf] (the first member [tyɪj] is not clear).[10] One name of a male child belongs to the tribal religious sphere; [kuanoːn] has a son called [asojxuurn] from [asojuɪr], the buffaloes of the [tiː]-dairy of this man's original patrilineal sib.[11] Another son of his is called [sinxuuːn] "gold-horn," which has no sib-connexions; the formation resembles that of women's names in its use of [sin] "gold," but the second member [kuuːn] "horn" is an element found not in women's names, but in male names with sib-connexions.[12] Similarly with [pumxuuːn] "fruit-horn," [13] the name of a son of [iːɪxuuːn] (21, Idrshkwòdr).

Tribal social customs have had in general to be abandoned. Funerals and weddings, for example, are conducted in Christian fashion, and the tribal manner of legitimizing children by giving a toy bow and arrow to the pregnant mother can no longer be used. A survival of tribal custom may be seen however in a preference for cross-cousin marriage (which is not prohibited by Church of England canon law or by English civil law). This is the preferential form within the tribe but operates with many exceptions. Consequently, marriage among the Christians can take place between those who are not cross-cousins without departure from tribal patterns. The small number of the Christians makes non-cross-cousin marriage obligatory in most cases. One case, however, is known to me in which cross-cousins were available, and here the failure

[9] *Ib.* §§ 26-8, for the formation.
[10] *Ib.* § 24 for -[ɪʒ] and § 27 for a name with this suffix added to its first member and followed by a second member.
[11] *Ib.* § 9.
[12] *Ib.* § 8.
[13] *Ib.* § 28, for the element [pum].

9:Emeneau L-5 (1935-1938) 1939 AW60 Toda AW60

797 has been baptised, will not be readmitted to the tribe. Children born in
794 the Christian community are not admitted to the tribe; the reason given
184 is that they are not legitimate, since no toy bow and arrow has been
[562] given for them, and so they cannot be fitted into the tribal social struc-
[851] ture. [alc] (3, Ults), his wife [sirmul] (30, Sirmul) and their children attempted to return to the tribe; only the man was received.

794 Blood and affinal relationships within the tribe involve each member
184 of the tribe in a network of rights and obligations. At a funeral, for
764 example, certain people related to the dead person must provide buffaloes
[982] to be slaughtered, and every man in the tribe has obligations of this sort which he will sooner or later have to meet, while on the other hand when he dies it will be obligatory on others to provide buffaloes for his funeral. It is felt by the tribe that the Christian Todas still have obligations of this sort towards their relatives in the tribe. Though the
[997] missionaries object to the obligations being met for funerals, the slaughter being based on a non-Christian attitude towards a future life, it has happened on several occasions that the Christians have met their obligations, either willingly or unwillingly. [kerxuuɪn] (63, Kergudr) provided a buffalo for the funeral of his father [kanus] (Kaners); I do not know whether this was voluntary on his part or not. In the case of [kanfusodj] however my notes are more complete. When he was a recent convert, on two occasions he provided buffaloes for classificatory brothers, [punog] (14, Punog) and [kiškeɪn] (14, Küshken). He says that he thought it best to follow the tribal rules and to yield to the insistence of the tribal council. Recently, however, [nertnus] (24, Nertiners) died, who had married [paɪuɪiʒfiɪj] (14, Poidjveli), the classificatory sister of [kanfusodj]. Her brother [noɪnmunj] (Nonmudri) and [kanfusodj] were the only surviving affines of [nertnus] who could be called on to provide a buffalo for the funeral; according to the present regulations they should have provided one buffalo between them. [noɪnmunj] had no buffaloes. One of the animals belonging to [kanfusodj] was at a tribal pasture under the care of [idjoɪn] (20, son of [teɪpax]). This was seized and slaughtered at the funeral in spite of protests by [kanfusodj]. It was finally arranged by the tribal council that [noɪnmunj] should pay to [kanfusodj] half the value of the buffalo.

794 Other obligations are found on the occasion of a woman's first mar-
184 riage. Her husband gives to her father his best buffalo or two buffaloes,
585 and five rupees; these are the [kökumlj] "bribe." He also makes a feast for all the Todas. The father then gives the husband [axpum] "dowry," *i.e.* a number of buffaloes, at least twice as many as the "bribe," plus one, *i.e.* three if the "bribe" was one, five if it was two.

9:Emeneau L-5 (1935-1938) 1939 AW60 Toda AW60

He also gives a feast. If the father is not alive, the duty devolves on his brothers, real or classificatory, in his immediate family, then on the woman's brothers, real or classificatory, in the immediate family, then on the generation of her brothers' sons. This obligation, both in regard to "bribe" and to "dowry," is still maintained in most cases between the two communities. The missionaries in this case approve, at least, Miss Ling approves. About ten years ago the Christian [kilker] gave one buffalo to [keːnoʒ] (21, Keinods), who is not a Christian, as "bribe" for the latter's classificatory sister [sodamut] (Sadamut), who was already a Christian; [keːnoʒ] then gave three buffaloes as "dowry." Previously the non-Christian [idjoːn] had given "dowry" for his Christian sister [lamdiʃ] (20, Numdeivi) when she was married to [kilker], the "bribe" having been given by the latter. When [kilker]'s father's sister [tuarfuːemj] (59, Turvalami) was married to [piʤonaːf] (64, Puthion), both the latter being non-Christians, a "bribe" was given to [kilker] by the latter and [kilker] gave three buffaloes as "dowry." [kuaːnoːn], who got his wife from the Todas by carrying her off (the [ter] pattern), did not give a "bribe" or get "dowry," though it is clear that the tribal patterns demanded it.

We find then that the tribe, though it has some resentment against the Christian converts from its ranks and treats them in some respects as outcastes, yet retains with them some rather important relationships. In marriage affairs the Christian Todas tend to be treated, without compulsion on either side, as if they were still members of the tribe. In funeral matters the tribe tries to demand that the Christians should fulfil their obligations, though the Christians are on the whole unwilling to meet them. If we look at the Badagas, we find that Christian converts from their ranks are outcastes and that the original community has no relations at all with them. No Kota has ever become a Christian. When we go to the more classical Hindu areas, we find from missionary accounts at least (few other accounts have ever been given), that in many cases the Christian converts are entirely outcaste and that no relations are maintained with the castes of origin other than that of extreme hostility on the part of the caste (the picture is perhaps not so simple as this, but accounts are defective). Can any explanation be given for the peculiar features in the Toda case? It is possibly to be found in the general situation. The areas in which the tribe and the Christians live is comparatively small, the two communities see much of one another necessarily, the Christian community still retains cattle as a necessary part of its economic life and so has a community of interest with the tribe and moreover has had to depend on the tribe in part for

4: Yalman E-4,5 (1954-1956) 1971 AX4 Sinhalese
Toda AW60

and-arrow ceremony of the Todas, the position of the child in the kin group is not in any doubt. We cannot argue that wherever we have the general structure we shall also find a loose or easily alterable connection between the spouses, but we can argue that the orderliness of marriageable and nonmarriageable kin categories permits a wide definition of the connection between the spouses: it can mean simply "intercourse," or, as in southern Ceylon, it can create a unique estate and a lasting bond between the pair. The open possibility of the loose connection clearly makes both polyandry and polygyny possible among people who utilize some version of the general structure. We shall look at further examples later on.

The similarity between the kin structure of the Toda and the peoples discussed in Ceylon is hardly surprising. There have been many close contacts between Ceylon and the mainland. Not only does the culture give an impression of underlying similarity but the similarity sometimes persists when pursued to the particulars of ceremonies. Thus the gift of a cloth at the union of a man and woman is a custom found among the Toda, the Sinhalese, and many castes on the Malabar coast. Again, the white cloths which are placed on the corpse by the Kandyan Sinhalese are found among the Toda (and Nayar) though each community puts this cloth to different use.

The further similarity, too, in such key words as *ichchil* (pollution) in Toda and *kili* in Sinhalese, or *matchuni* (Toda for cross-cousin) and *mazina* (Sinhalese), and many others increases the impression that we are dealing with variations on a common theme.[4] It is the fundamental features common to both systems which have engaged our attention: it could certainly not be claimed that structural similarity goes beyond the fundamentals. But that is the point: each community in this region uses a variety of special customs to set itself off from others. The manner of wearing clothes, different types of sari and dress, bodily marks—all these are well known. But it appears that the process has been carried even into matters of structural importance, so that one community will have a certain kind of marriage simply in order to distinguish itself even more from another community.

TANJORE ADI DRAVIDA AND BRAHMAN

Although many books have been written by scholars and others on the multifold aspects of Southeast India, those that deal with kinship are few, and of recent date. Our conclusions must, of necessity, be limited

[4] The intriguing similarity between the manner of wearing their robes by the Toda priests (who handle the sacred milk) and by Buddhist monks elsewhere is obviously hardly an accident.